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Matthew Fehrrs

"Are You Talkin' to Me? The Domestic Politics of Government Signaling in International Conflicts"

Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008

Noon

Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

See a [streaming video](#) of this event. This streaming video requires RealPlayer. If you do not have RealPlayer, you can [download it free](#).

Matthew Fehrrs received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Duke University. His project, "Are You Talkin' to Me? The Domestic Politics of Government Signaling in International Conflicts," explores three puzzles in international relations theory:

- What causes a country to have or perceive incomplete information and lead states to war?
- Why, despite high levels of transparency and freedom of information, are democracies likely to be attacked?
- What is the role of opposition groups in military crises?

To answer these questions, Fehrrs developed a theory that focuses on the unity and hawkishness of the government in democratic states. He hypothesizes that the more unified a government, the less likely it is to send mixed signals to potential challengers. Likewise, the more hawkish a country, the more likely it is to use military posturing and harsh rhetoric.

During his year at the Mershon Center, Fehrrs plans to pursue two case-study articles. The first will provide an alternative explanation for the Falklands War based on his dissertation theory, analyzing the divisions within the British government and how these were viewed by the Argentines. The second will apply Fehrrs's theory to contradictions in British signaling prior to World War I.



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